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ABSTRACT

This report provides background--including information on structure, funding levels, program evaluation and issues--on federal programs which provide financial or material assistance to public, school, and college libraries. Federal library grant programs are covered in the following categories: (1) aid to public libraries under the Library Services and Construction Act; (2) aid to college libraries under the Higher Education Act; (3) aid to elementary and secondary school library under Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act; and (4) grants to libraries by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Also covered are the activities of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, past and proposed White House Conferences on Libraries and Information Services, the assistance to libraries provided by the Library of Congress, and other federal activities affecting libraries. The appendix provides summary information on fiscal years 1987 and 1988 funding for selected library assistance programs. (MES)

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CRS REPORT FOR CONGRESS

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO LIBRARIES: BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ISSUES RELATED TO CURRENT PROGRAMS

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July 31, 1987

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ABSTRACT

Federal programs provide assistance to public, elementary and secondary school, and college libraries. The Federal Government has also assisted libraries through the activities of the Library of Congress, the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and a White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services in 1979. The programs have generally experienced a modest expansion in recent years, especially in terms of the range of authorized activities. This report provides background information on the structure of these programs, their current and proposed funding levels, available program evaluations and reports, and general issues related to the programs.

SUMMARY

A variety of Federal programs and agencies provide assistance to public, college, and school libraries. In addition to grant programs of various types, the Federal Government provides library related research, development, technical assistance, and leadership services, as well as directly providing library services to individuals and other libraries in several fields. While each of these programs is relatively small--the fiscal year 1987 appropriation for the largest program specifically for libraries is $80 million--the aggregate level of Federal assistance to libraries, including both grants and other forms of aid, as well as the relative Federal contribution to certain types of library services, is more substantial.

The Federal programs of aid to public and college libraries have been substantially amended in recent years, while the elementary and secondary education block grant program under which funds are used for school libraries is currently being reauthorized by the Congress. The 100th Congress is also considering legislation to authorize a second White House Conference on Library and Information Services. A number of issues have arisen regarding these and other Federal library programs and agencies, particularly issues related to effectiveness, need, funding levels, and coordination of similar programs or activities; these issues, along with relevant background information, are discussed in this report.

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FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO LIBRARIES: BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ISSUES RELATED TO CURRENT PROGRAMS

A variety of Federal programs have provided financial or material assistance to public, school, and college libraries since enactment of the original Library Services Act in 1956, or the initiation of the Federal depository library system in 1859. Although continued Federal funding for these programs has been questioned, the programs have continued, and some have experienced a modest expansion in terms of their appropriations levels and authorized activities. This report provides background information on these programs, including brief information on their structure, authorized activities, funding levels, program evaluations (where available), and issues. 1/

The programs and activities covered in this report are as follows:

--Federal library grant programs:

  --aid to public libraries under the Library Services and Construction Act,

  --aid to college libraries under the Higher Education Act,

  --aid to elementary and secondary school libraries under chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, and

  --grants to libraries by the National Endowment for the Humanities;

--The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science;

--Past, and proposed future, White House Conferences on Libraries and Information Services;

1/ Discussions of issues are provided only for the library grant programs and the principal Federal agencies involved with libraries.

--Assistance to libraries provided by the Library of Congress and other Federal libraries; and

--Other Federal activities that significantly affect libraries.

An appendix table provides summary information on FY 1987 and 1988 funding for selected library assistance programs.

I. FEDERAL LIBRARY GRANT PROGRAMS

Aid to Public Libraries Under the Library Services and Construction Act

The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) was the first, and continues to be the largest, Federal program of assistance specifically to libraries. As most recently amended in 1984 (P.L. 98-480), the LSCA contains 6 titles that authorize aid to public libraries. Except for title V (acquisition of foreign language materials), the LSCA programs are currently authorized through FY 1989 (title V is authorized through FY 1988). Again with the exception of title V, funds have been appropriated for all titles of the LSCA for each of fiscal years 1986 and 1987. 2/ Grants are allocated by statutory formula to the States under titles I-III of the LSCA, while titles V and VI are smaller, discretionary grant programs, where awards are based on national competition among applicants.

Title I, Library Services

Title I of the LSCA is the largest Federal assistance program specifically for libraries, with an FY 1987 appropriation of $80 million. While LSCA title

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2/ As will be described further below, title IV of the LSCA is not funded as a separate program. Title IV provides that 1.5 percent of the appropriations for each of titles I-III be used for grants to serve American Indians, and that 0.5 percent be used for grants to serve Native Hawaiians.

I is also the most broad and general of the Federal library programs, the legislative intent is that title I funds not be used for general operations, but to expand the range of library services offered in the States, either by serving previously unserved or underserved populations--especially the elderly, the handicapped, or those living in residential institutions--or by providing new types of services to the public at large. To help assure that Federal funds are supplementary, LSCA title I includes a series of maintenance-of-effort requirements. 3/ As is discussed later in this report, in the section on program issues, there have been mixed findings regarding the extent to which LSCA title I funds have been used for service expansion versus maintenance of existing services.

Title I grants are allocated to the States on the basis of a formula that includes a State/local matching requirement. Two percent of total title I appropriations are set-aside for grants to American Indians and Native Hawaiians (under title IV). From the remaining funds, each State first receives a flat grant of $200,000 ($40,000 for each Outlying Area 4/), while additional funds are allocated among the States on the basis of their total population. The State matching requirement varies from 33 to 66 percent of the total (Federal plus State match) program costs, depending on the State's personal income per capita. The lower the State's personal income per capita, the lower the required matching percentage.

3/ In order to receive title I grants, States must assure that State and local expenditures for the purposes for which the title I funds will be used will equal or exceed such State and local expenditures for the second preceding year; and that expenditures from all sources for library services to institutionalized and handicapped persons will equal or exceed such expenditures for the second preceding year.

4/ The Outlying Areas are American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Virgin Islands.

The distribution of LSCA title I funds among public libraries within States is conducted largely at the discretion of the State library agencies. One limitation is that in years when title I appropriations exceed $60 million, a portion of the title I grant in most States must be reserved for libraries serving cities with a population of 100,000 or more. 5/

The appropriations authorization level for LSCA title I is $85 million for fiscal year (FY) 1987, $90 million for FY 1988, and $95 million for FY 1989. The FY 1987 appropriation is $80 million.

Issues: The primary issues with respect to LSCA title I, and the LSCA in general, are whether the Act's purposes have been met, and whether the program has substantial impact on the availability and quality of library services. The primary original purpose of the Library Services Act of 1956 was to extend public library services to rural and other areas that had no public libraries. This basic goal would appear to have been met; the Department of Education estimates that 96 percent of the U.S. population has access to public library services, and that the remaining 4 percent live in such isolated circumstances that extension of services to them would be uneconomical. However, there is no general consensus on standards for "adequate," as opposed to minimal, public library services, nor any claim that 96 percent or more of the American population has access to "adequate" public library services.

In comparison to total revenues for public libraries from all sources, LSCA title I funds, or even all LSCA grants, would be relatively insignificant. An estimated 5 percent of all public library revenues come from Federal

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5/ The required proportion of grants, made from appropriations in excess of $60 million, that must be reserved for libraries serving cities with a population of 100,000 or more varies by State, depending on whether the State contains any such cities and, if so, whether 50 percent or more of the total State population resides in such cities.

sources. However, LSCA title I funds are not intended to be used for general operations, but for innovative services or services to special populations, such as the elderly or those in institutions. Unfortunately, the most recent evaluation of actual use of LSCA title I funds was published in 1981, and is based on data from 1978. 6/ According to that study, the use of LSCA title I funds was almost evenly split between ongoing services to the general public, versus innovative programs or services to special populations--e.g., handicapped, limited-English proficient, Indian, institutionalized, or other disadvantaged persons. However, many of the "ongoing services to the general public" appear to have been services initiated earlier with LSCA title I funds. Further, the distinction between "innovative" versus "ongoing" services is not clearly defined in the LSCA, and may be subject to debate. Therefore, the fact that an LSCA title I-supported service was not found in this study to be "innovative" does not necessarily mean that Federal funds simply supplanted State and local revenues for basic library services. The authors of the 1981 evaluation recommended modifications to the legislation and to oversight activities by the Department of Education to reduce the extent to which title I funds were used to maintain existing services, although this would have the disadvantage of reducing the large degree of flexibility that States now have to determine the uses and distribution of funds.

The 1981 study also found that LSCA title I funds represented 25 percent of all funds specifically devoted to State-sponsored, innovative, public library projects. Such projects involved the introduction of new technologies, community outreach services, continuing education for librarians, provision of services to the blind and physically handicapped, establishment of regional

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6/ Applied Management Sciences, An Evaluation of Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act, January 1981.

library systems, and improving the capacities of State library agencies. Thus, the potential significance and effect of LSCA title I funds depends primarily on whether they are viewed as a relatively small part of the total revenues of libraries, or as a relatively substantial share of "seed money" for expanded and innovative services.

Title II, Public Library Construction

Assistance for public library construction projects is authorized under title II of the LSCA. Authorized uses of title II funds include, but are not limited to, construction to remove barriers to access by handicapped persons, to conserve energy, to accommodate new information technologies, or to renovate historic buildings for use as public libraries.

LSCA title II funds are allocated to States using the same allocation formula and matching requirements as for title I, with two exceptions. First, the flat grant amount is $100,000 for each State ($20,000 for each Outlying Area). Second, the Federal share of total construction costs for each individual project assisted under title II may not exceed 50 percent. Grants for individual projects within each State are made at the discretion of the State library agency. Funds were not appropriated for LSCA title II throughout most of the 1970s and early 1980s. However, Federal support for this program was revived in FY 1983, and it has been funded in each of FY 1985-1987.

The appropriations authorization level for LSCA title II is $50 million for each of FY 1987-1989. The FY 1987 appropriation is $22.5 million.

Issues: In general, Federal programs in the areas of education, arts, and humanities provide few funds for construction, other than minor remodelling. This is at least partially because construction is usually considered to be a

"basic" cost of providing education and related services, while Federal aid tends to be limited to the "supplementary" costs of providing "special" services. Similarly, no funds were appropriated for LSCA title II between fiscal years 1974 and 1982. However, funds have been provided under title II in FY 1983 and in each year since 1985. The primary issues with respect to this assistance is whether it is an appropriate Federal role, and whether the aid is necessary.

While States are given substantial discretion in awarding LSCA title II funds, projects to be assisted include those to increase access to libraries by the handicapped, to conserve energy, to accommodate new technologies, or to convert historic buildings for use as libraries. Further, States and localities are required to match the Federal funds for each construction project, on at least a one-to-one basis. Thus, title II funds provide only partial support of construction projects, which are intended to help meet a Federal mandate (with respect to accessibility for the handicapped) or national legislative goals (of energy conservation, preservation of historic buildings, or adoption of new information technologies) under the LSCA or other statutes. Nevertheless, there is no requirement that title II funds be used to meet any of the above purposes, and the legislation contains no test or measure of need. As a result, it might be argued that title II funds largely supplant State or local funds that might otherwise be used for construction of public libraries.

Finally, in contrast to LSCA title I, title II grants may represent a substantial share of total expenditures for public library construction in the United States. The annual average of total public library construction and renovation expenditures in FY 1980-1984 is reported as having been $126.2

million. 7/ The FY 1987 appropriation for title II of $22.5 million would represent approximately 18 percent of such an expenditure level.

Title III, Interlibrary Cooperation and Resource Sharing

Title III of the LSCA authorizes grants to the States for planning, developing, and implementing cooperative library resource-sharing networks. Historically, such resource-sharing primarily has taken the form of interlibrary loan programs, under which books not available at one library could be provided through other libraries in the region or State. While such interlibrary loan networks are still supported under title III, the program currently assists a variety of new forms of information technology, such as computer bibliographic systems that communicate through telephone lines.

LSCA title III funds are allocated to States using the same allocation formula as for title I, with two exceptions. First, the flat grant amount is $40,000 for each State ($10,000 for each Outlying Area). Second, there are no matching or maintenance-of-effort requirements for title III.

The appropriations authorization level for LSCA title III is $30 million for FY 1987, $35 million for FY 1988, and $30 million for FY 1989. The FY 1987 appropriation is $18 million.

Issues: It is highly probable that LSCA title III funds helped to stimulate the development and rapid growth of interlibrary loan programs and regional library consortia in the early years of the program, and of computerized bibliographic information transfer networks more recently. The major current issue for this program is whether the title III funds any longer

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7/ The Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information, 1985 edition, p. 455.

significantly stimulate the development and expansion of these services, or the initiation of new information and communications technologies, such as optical laser disks. Unfortunately, the lack of any significant or recent evaluations of this program make it impossible to provide reliable answers to such questions. While it is possible that title III funds are now largely used to maintain services that were initiated with previous title III grants, and that might be continued with State or local funds if title III aid were no longer available, there is no way to confirm such a hypothesis. Alternatively, title III funds might continue to be focused primarily on "cutting edge" information sharing techniques; but this cannot be confirmed either.

As noted elsewhere in this report, certain other Federal agencies--particularly the Library of Congress and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science--conduct research, development, and dissemination activities related to library technologies. Therefore, a secondary issue related to LSCA title III is whether the Federal Government can best aid libraries in this area through research and development, or through the financial assistance for implementation under title III. It might also be asked whether these related activities are sufficiently coordinated to be efficiently conducted and the results widely disseminated.

Title IV, Library Services for Indian Tribes

Title IV of the LSCA is not a separate authorization of appropriations; rather, it provides that certain funds from appropriations for titles I through III be set-aside to support services to American Indians and Native Hawaiians. The amount of each of title I through III's appropriations to be set-aside is 1.5 percent for American Indian tribes, and 0.5 percent for Native Hawaiians. The funds available to serve American Indians are to be allocated in equal

portions to each applicant Indian tribe. Each program for which funds are so granted must be administered by a librarian. The grants for services to Native Hawaiians are to be distributed to organizations representing such persons that are recognized by the Governor of Hawaii. The provisions of title IV were added to the LSCA by the 1984 amendments to that Act (P.L. 98-480, as amended by P.L. 95-159).

Issues: Since this is a relatively new program, involving set-asides of funds from the existing LSCA titles I through III, there have been no evaluations, and no major issues have arisen. As this program develops, issues might arise regarding the distribution of these funds, and the efficiency with which the funds are used to provide library services to Indians and Native Hawaiians.

Title V, Foreign Language Materials Acquisition

Under title V of the LSCA, grants are authorized for the acquisition of foreign language materials. Grants are to be made on a nationally competitive basis, and no annual grant shall be for more than $15,000. The appropriations authorization level for title V is $1 million for each of fiscal years 1987 and 1988. Through FY 1987, no funds had been appropriated for this title, which was added to the LSCA in 1984 (P.L. 98-480).

Issues: As this program has not been funded or implemented, no issues have arisen with respect to it. If funds are appropriated for LSCA title V in the future, it might be questioned whether such a small program could have a significant impact on the foreign language collections of more than a very small number of public libraries.

Title VI, Library Literacy Programs

The final title of the LSCA authorizes grants for literacy programs in public libraries, to be made on the basis of National competition. No annual grant may exceed $25,000. The grants may be used for coordinating, planning, promoting, or conducting literacy programs in public libraries. Grants may also be used for training librarians and volunteers to participate in such programs.

The appropriations authorization level for LSCA title VI, which was added to the LSCA in 1984 (P.L. 98-480), is $5 million for each of fiscal years 1987 and 1988. The FY 1987 appropriation for this program is $5 million.

Issues: The primary issues for LSCA title VI are whether such a relatively small program, with a particularly low grant size limit ($25,000), can significantly reduce the extent of adult illiteracy, whether this program complements--or duplicates--the programs of the Adult Education Act, and whether grants under this program will significantly add to the number of library literacy activities being conducted without Federal assistance.

Since 1981, a Coalition for Literacy has been sponsored by the American Library Association and a number of other organizations, such as the International Reading Association and the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. Using funds provided by private foundations and other sources, the Coalition provides technical assistance, advertising, and other services to libraries conducting literacy programs throughout the Nation. The existence of this privately sponsored and funded network might help to increase the efficiency with which LSCA title VI grants are utilized; alternatively, with library literacy activities already being stimulated and assisted by this network, LSCA title VI grants might have little net impact. As yet, there have

been no evaluations that might indicate which of these hypotheses would more accurately portray the effects of this program.

Aid to College Libraries Under the Higher Education Act

Several forms of assistance to libraries at institutions of postsecondary education are authorized under title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA), Academic Library and Information Technology Enhancement. The legislation authorizing these programs was most recently amended and extended in the Higher Education Act Amendments of 1986 (P.L. 99-498). Title II of the HEA has authorized aid to college libraries since the Act was initially adopted in 1965 (P.L. 89-329). In FY 1987 and the immediately preceding fiscal years, funds were appropriated for parts B and C of title II. Funds were last appropriated for part A in FY 1981, while no funds have yet been appropriated for part D in its current form. 8/

Title II, Part A, College Library Resources

Part A of HEA title II authorizes a program of general purpose grants for library services at certain institutions of postsecondary education. As amended in 1986 (P.L. 99-498), part A funds may be provided only to institutions where the expenditures for library services, and the number of library volumes, per full-time equivalent (FTE) student are below the National average for institutions of comparable size and programs. (This requirement may be waived by the Department of Education, but only for up to 5 percent of the

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8/ Previous to enactment of the Higher Education Amendments of 1986, part D of title II authorized a study of the feasibility of establishing a National Periodical System for college libraries. However, no funds were ever appropriated for this activity. A new part D was added by P.L. 99-498.

institutions receiving grants.) Grants are to be made in proportion to the number of FTE students at eligible institutions, and are to be within the range of $2,000-10,000 per annual grant.

To be eligible for a part A grant, institutions must maintain their library expenditures per FTE student in the year preceding a grant at the level of the average of such expenditures for the second and third preceding years (although a waiver of this requirement may be issued in "very unusual circumstances"). The grants under this part may be used for the purchase of books, periodicals, computer software and data, audiovisual materials, or for the establishment and maintenance of information-sharing networks.

A separate provision of the Higher Education Amendments of 1986 9/ requires the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science to conduct a study of the effectiveness of the title II, part A, aid eligibility criteria in directing assistance to institutions with the greatest need.

The appropriations authorization level for part A is $10 million for FY 1987, "such sums as may be necessary" for FY 1988-1991. No funds were appropriated in FY 1987 for part A; funds were most recently appropriated for previous title II, part A, programs in FY 1981.

Issues: No funds have been appropriated for HEA II-A since FY 1981. Previously, this program provided relatively small grants for the general support of library services, for which virtually every institution of higher education was eligible. In 1986, part A was revised to limit eligibility generally to institutions with lower than average library volumes or expenditures per FTE student. It remains to be seen whether this limitation on eligibility will result in appropriations again being provided for the part A

9/ Title XIII, sec. 1331, of P.L. 99-498.

program. If appropriations were provided, the size of these grants would again be relatively small: $2,000-10,000 per year for each eligible institution.

While the 1986 amendments to part A address the earlier program issue of whether participating institutions needed the Federal assistance, it may still be questioned whether such relatively small grants will have a significant effect, especially since the funds may be used to support library resources in general, rather than being limited to more specific purposes. Also, while program eligibility is more limited than previously, approximately one-half of all institutions of higher education could still qualify for grants, so the program would not be sharply targeted in terms of the number of recipients either.

Title II, Part B, Library Training, Research, and Development

Part B of title II of the HEA authorizes two types of assistance to postsecondary level libraries: library career training; and support for research and demonstration projects related to libraries. Library career training grants are authorized to be used to support student fellowships or traineeships, the development or expansion of librarian education programs using new forms of information technology, and either short-term or regular session institutes for continuing education of experienced librarians. In practice, these grants are used to support graduate fellowships, primarily for women or members of minority groups.

Research and demonstration grants may be made to a wide variety of organizations for projects related to libraries, librarianship, and information technology. In recent years, awards have been made under this program for studies of librarian education programs, literacy education in libraries,

library services to Indian tribes, possible systems for collection of data on library activities, and other topics.

The appropriations authorization for part B is $5 million for FY 1987, "such sums as may be necessary" for FY 1988-1991. It is provided that two-thirds of appropriations for this part shall be used for library career training, the remaining one-third for research and demonstrations. The FY 1987 appropriation for this part is $1 million.

Issues: When the part B program was initiated, there was generally perceived to be a shortage of qualified professional librarians, relative to the demand. However, estimates of the supply and demand for professional librarians in recent years have indicated that no such shortage any longer exists, and may have been replaced by a surplus. 10/ Partially in response to this situation, the part B program has focused its grants on fellowships for minorities and women. However, while concern has been expressed about the status of minorities and women in librarianship, the main focus of that concern has been the number of such individuals in leadership positions, not the aggregate number of minority and female librarians. 11/ Thus, it might be questioned whether a program aimed at increasing the number of minorities and women with library degrees will alleviate concerns about their status in the profession.

Given the rapid pace of technological developments in library and information services, there might be substantial value in supporting continuing

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10/ See, for example, Library Human Resources: A Study of Supply and Demand, by King Research, Inc., 1983, which forecast an excess of supply over demand for professional librarians through 1990.

11/ See, for example, Placements and Salaries, 1983: Catching Up, by Carol L. Learmont and Stephen Van Houten, in The Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information, 1985, p. 356-371.

education programs for experienced librarians. While grants for continuing education are authorized under part B and LSCA title I funds could also be used for continuing education of librarians, part B funds are not currently used for that purpose, and it is not known to what extent LSCA I grants are currently used for continuing education.

Regarding the use of part B funds for research and demonstrations, the main issues are whether such a small program (currently, approximately $333,000) might have any substantial impact, and whether this program duplicates--or is insufficiently coordinated with--other Federal activities in library research and development. As discussed elsewhere in this report, library and information science research and development activities are conducted also by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the Library of Congress. While it might be argued that these other research and development activities do not focus on the specific concerns of college and university libraries many HEA II-B activities are not specifically related to postsecondary libraries either.

Title II, Part C, Strengthening Research Library Resources

Part C of title II authorizes grants to research libraries, with collections deemed to be uniquely significant for scholarly research, at higher education institutions and elsewhere. Research libraries assisted under this program must have collections that are of National or international significance for scholarly research, that are unique, and that are in substantial demand by scholars not connected with the institution holding the collection. The Secretary of Education must allow institutions that would not regularly qualify for grants to submit additional information on the scholarly

significance of their collections. The Secretary is also required to attempt to achieve a broad geographical distribution of part C grants.

In recent years, part C grants have been made to approximately 40-50 institutions per year. Most of the grantees have been institutions of higher education, but a significant proportion have been museums, historical societies, independent research libraries, and public libraries. The grants are generally used for the preservation of rare books and other materials, for development of specialized collections, or for cataloging and organizing collections.

The appropriations authorization for part C is $10 million for FY 1987, and "such sums as may be necessary" for FY 1988-1991. The FY 1987 appropriation is $6 million.

Issues: The primary issues regarding the title II-C program have been the need for the program, and the fairness--and geographic distribution--of the competition for grants. While conceptually separate, these issues are interrelated, since some have argued that the grants are unnecessary specifically because they tend to go to a limited number of institutions that are generally able to pay for the assisted activities from their own endowment income or other resources.

A comparison of HEA title II-C grants for fiscal years 1985 and 1986 indicates that 22 of the 38 institutions (58 percent) receiving awards in FY 1986 also received awards in FY 1985. Among the institutions receiving grants in both years were several large and prestigious universities with substantial endowments and other financial resources, including Stanford University, Dartmouth College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, and Harvard University.

In response to these concerns, it might be argued that the part C statute does not specify that institutional need be considered in making grants, and that only the scholarly importance of the collections and the quality of the proposals are taken into account in awarding these funds. The Higher Education Amendments of 1986 (P.L. 99-498) amended part C to require that the Department of Education permit institutions that do not otherwise qualify for grants to provide additional information on the scholarly significance of the collections upon which their proposals are based. It is also required that the Department of Education attempt to achieve "broad and equitable geographic distribution" of part C grants.

Title II, Part D, College Library Technology and Cooperation Grants

Part D of title II authorizes College Library Technology and Cooperation Grants. This program authorizes competitive grants to higher education and affiliated institutions to plan for, establish, equip, or maintain networks for sharing library resources (interlibrary loan programs, computer-based bibliographic and other information systems, etc.). Minimum awards are to be $15,000, to be expended over a 3-year period, and the Federal grant must be matched by non-Federal funds equal to at least one-third of the Federal allocation.

The authorization of appropriations for part D is $5 million for FY 1987, and "such sums as may be necessary" for FY 1988-1991. In addition, legislation has been passed by the House in the 100th Congress (H.R. 3, the Trade and Export Enhancement Act of 1987) that would add $5 million to the part D authorization for FY 1988, and "such sums as may be necessary" for FY 1989-1991. The purpose of the additional authorization is to support college library technology activities related to education for trade competitiveness.

A House-Senate conference on H.R. 3 provisions is expected to meet shortly. Through FY 1987, no funds had been appropriated for this program, which was initially authorized under the Higher Education Amendments of 1986.

Issues: Since this is a new authorization that has not yet been funded, no issues have arisen with respect to the part D program.

Aid to Elementary and Secondary School Libraries Under Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act

Currently, no Federal program provides assistance specifically to elementary and secondary school libraries. However, elementary and secondary school library resources are among the activities that may be supported by grants under the block grant program of chapter 2, Education Consolidation and Improvement Act. Chapter 2 was preceded by a program of grants specifically to elementary and secondary school libraries, under title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as originally enacted in 1965. Title II existed as a separate program until adoption of the Education Amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-380), under which aid to libraries was combined with other programs for instructional equipment and materials in title IV, part B, of the ESEA, Instructional Materials and School Library Resources. Finally, in the 1981 Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA), title IV and much of the rest of the ESEA were consolidated into ECIA chapter 2.

Under chapter 2, block grant funds are allocated to the States in proportion to total school-age population (ages 5-17 years). States must distribute at least 80 percent of their grants to all local educational agencies (LEAs) in the State, using State-developed allocation formulas that take into account LEAs' overall enrollment levels as well as the extent to which LEAs enroll pupils whose educational costs are higher than average (e.g.,

handicapped or educationally disadvantaged pupils). LEAs may use their chapter 2 grants for any of a wide array of purposes, including library resources.

Given the nature of the block grant, LEAs may use all, or none, of their chapter 2 funds for library resources, at their discretion. In practice, a recent study indicates that at least some chapter 2 funds were used in 1984-85 for "libraries and media centers" in a substantial majority--68 percent--of a nationally representative sample of LEAs. It was further estimated that approximately 29 percent of all chapter 2 funds received by local educational agencies were used for "libraries and media centers." 12/ In addition to library books and related materials, the category of "libraries and media centers" was defined to include all instructional materials and equipment other than computers--i.e., science laboratory equipment, films, videocassette recorders and tapes, etc., were included in this category. This use of funds ranked second only to "computer applications" in terms of the percentage of LEAs using chapter 2 grants for this purpose, and in terms of the percentage of chapter 2 local funds so used. Thus, although there is no requirement that any LEAs use chapter 2 funds for library services, and the category used in this study includes more than library resources as typically defined, it would appear likely that a substantial share of chapter 2 grants is used for library resources.

The authorization of appropriations for chapter 2 is "such sums as may be necessary" for FY 1987. Under current law, this authorization terminates at the end of FY 1987; however, under sec. 414 of the General Education Provisions Act (title IV of P.L. 90-247, as amended), this authorization may be automatically extended for at least one additional fiscal year. Legislation to

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12/ SRI International, The Educational Block Grant at the Local Level: The Implementation of Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act in Districts and Schools, January 1986, p. 42 and 45.

extend the chapter 2 authorization has been passed by the House of Representatives, 13/ and is being considered by the Senate. The FY 1987 appropriation for the State block grant program under chapter 2 is $500 million.

Issues: From the enactment of the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 until adoption of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) in 1981, there were Federal programs of assistance specifically for school libraries (ESEA title II from 1965 until 1974) or "school libraries and learning resources" (ESEA title IV-B from 1974 until 1981). While school library resources have since 1981 been combined with a wide range of other purposes in a block grant, with the extent to which funds are used for this purpose left to the discretion of local and State education agencies, the study discussed above indicates that a substantial share of the block grant funds are being used for library resources. The primary issue with respect to the chapter 2 block grant is whether the current extent of support for school libraries under chapter 2 is "adequate," and whether the block grant approach is preferable to a categorical form of aid specifically for libraries.

As noted above, the major study of chapter 2 found that approximately 29 percent of local funds are being used for "library and media centers," a category that is somewhat broader than "library resources," since it included such items as science laboratory equipment. Nevertheless, if one applies the full 29 percent to local educational agency share of the FY 1987 appropriation for the block grant (80 percent of $500 million), the result would be approximately $116 million in aid used for "library and media centers." While

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13/ H.R. 5, the School Improvement Act of 1987, was passed by the House on May 21, 1987. The Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities is currently holding hearings on ECIA reauthorization issues.

there is no generally accepted criterion for measuring the "adequacy" of such a level of aid, it might be compared to the funding level for "libraries and learning resources" under ESEA title IV-B in the last year of that program's existence (FY 1981). The FY 1981 appropriation for ESEA IV-B was $161 million; the estimated equivalent value of that appropriation in FY 1987 terms (i.e., adjusting for inflation in price levels between FY 1981 and FY 1987) is approximately $230 million. 14/ Thus, it might be estimated that the level of Federal support for school library resources and related purposes has declined by approximately 49 percent since adoption of the chapter 2 block grant.

The broader issue with respect to chapter 2 and school libraries--or any specific educational activity--is whether it is preferable to provide general aid to local educational agencies (LEAs), so that they can apply their own judgment and priorities in choosing where the funds might most effectively be spent, as opposed to the application of national judgment and priorities that is implicit in more specific aid programs. At least one bill has been introduced in the 100th Congress (S. 627) that would require chapter 2 funds to be used for a limited number of specified purposes, including school library resources. However, any further discussion of this general issue is beyond the scope of this report; for additional discussion of this and related issues, see the Congressional Research Service report, Education Block Grant Reauthorization: Selected Options, by Paul M. Irwin, June 1, 1987, Report No. 87-494 EPW.

14/ The price index used is the deflator for State and local government purchases of services (fixed-weight version), provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, February 1987.

Grants To Libraries By The National Endowment For The Humanities

Although it does not conduct programs specifically for aid to libraries, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) makes a significant number of grants to public, college or independent libraries for certain specialized purposes, such as the preservation of rare books, films, and other materials, or the development of collections. In FY 1986, the NEH made approximately $2.8 million in grants for humanities projects in libraries (e.g., exhibitions of books and documents, lectures, reading and discussion programs, etc.), and $4.1 million in preservation grants, many of which were made to libraries. A small NEH program ($218,000 in FY 1986) provides grants for travel by scholars to library and other collections. Libraries may also apply for funds under the general NEH programs of grants to States and Challenge Grants. Finally, several of the grants of the Division of Research Programs, especially those for the development and cataloguing of collections, have at least partially assisted numerous postsecondary, independent, or major public libraries.

Issues: Perhaps the only issue that has arisen with respect to National Endowment for the Humanities grants to libraries is the question of whether the activities supported by the NEH are sufficiently coordinated with the frequently similar activities conducted with grants under part C of title II of the Higher Education Act or the Library Services and Construction Act, and by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, the Library of Congress, or other Federal programs and agencies. Coordination of the activities of these agencies and programs might be especially useful in such areas as research and development in preservation technologies, or in methods to increase access to collections of rare books or other materials.

II. THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science was established in 1970 (P.L. 91-345), as an independent agency within the executive branch of the Federal Government. As stated in the authorizing legislation, the purposes of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science are to:

--advise the President, the Congress, plus other Federal, State, local, and private agencies on policies related to libraries;

--prepare studies of the library and information needs of the Nation, including the adequacy of current services and programs;

--develop plans for meeting national library and information needs; and

--promote library-related research and development activities.

In addition, a major activity of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science has been the planning for and management of the 1979 (and proposed future) White House Conference on Library and Information Services. The Commission consists of 15 members, including the Librarian of Congress (or his/her representative). At least five members must be professional librarians or information specialists.

Specific activities of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in recent years have included the preparation of numerous reports (either directly or via contract) on such topics as the role of libraries in supporting reform of elementary and secondary education, an

analysis of fee-charging by libraries, ways in which libraries can help meet the needs of such special populations as the elderly or disadvantaged persons, relationships between information services and economic productivity, community information and referral services in libraries, public/private sector interaction in providing information services, and communication of information via computers. The Commission has also conducted seminars and conferences on various library issues, and provided advice and technical assistance to various Federal agencies and officers. Finally, the Commission has proposed a "National Program for Library and Information Services," focused on a nationwide network for information-sharing.

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science is authorized for an indefinite period, at an authorized appropriations level of $750,000 per year. The FY 1987 appropriation is $660,000. Additional resources are often provided by the loaning of staff from--or the conduct of cooperative projects with--other Federal agencies, or the performance of research under contract to other agencies or the private sector.

Issues: The primary issue with respect to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and its activities is the ambiguity of its role. Any assumed role for the Commission, beyond the neutral provision of technical assistance, is at least somewhat controversial and contradictory to other possible roles. For example, some have assumed that the Commission should be the primary "spokesman" for libraries within the Administration and in making presentations to the Congress. Yet this role would conflict with the Commission's supposed independence, as well as the reality of the Commission's position as part of the Administration, and the fact that Commission members are Presidential appointees. Others have supposed that the Commission should be the primary developer of Federal library policies. Yet other, and much

larger, agencies compete with the Commission in providing such leadership--the Department of Education, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Library of Congress, for example.

Perhaps as a result of this role-ambiguity, the only clear functions of the Commission appear to have been the provision of technical advice and research, plus the coordination of the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Services (and proposals for a second White House Conference). Otherwise, this small Commission receives relatively little attention, and seems to have little influence on, or coordination with, Federal library policies. Representatives of major library professional organizations, such as the American Library Association, have also criticized the Commission for being "out of touch" with "mainstream" concerns, positions, and organizations of the profession. 15/

15/ For example, see Our Commission, Our Omissions, by Eric Moon, Library Journal, July 1984, p. 1283-1287.

III. PAST, AND PROPOSED FUTURE, WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

In 1979, a White House Conference on Library and Information Services was held for the first, and thus far only, time. As will be described further below, legislation to authorize a similar conference in 1989 is currently being considered by the 100th Congress.

The 1979 White House Conference was authorized under P.L. 93-568. This Act stated that the Conference should be held no later than 1978, although it was actually conducted in 1979. The authorizing legislation for the Conference provided that it bring together representatives of Federal, State, and local governments; educational institutions, agencies, and associations; institutions and organizations that provide library and information services; plus persons knowledgeable about library and information science technologies. Among the reasons stated in the authorizing statute for holding the Conference were the "indispensability" of access to information and ideas for the "continuance of enlightened self-government," the "essentiality" of "growth and augmentation of the Nation's libraries and information centers," and the "requirement" for national coordination to utilize the potential of new technologies for enhancing library services. The Conference was coordinated by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, with the assistance of a 28-member advisory committee. A total of $3.5 million was authorized to be appropriated to plan for and conduct the Conference. The actual amount appropriated for the Conference was also $3.5 million.

The White House Conference on Library and Information Services was preceded by conferences in each of the States and Outlying Areas. The Conference made a series of recommendations in a wide range of areas related to library and information services. The topics addressed by the Conference's resolutions included access to information, literacy, censorship, Federal support for libraries, dissemination of Federal publications, the status of library programs within the Department of Education, postal rates, technological development and implementation in information networks, international cooperation and information-sharing, plus services to special populations (e.g., the handicapped, Indians, and other minorities). The Conference also proposed the adoption of a Comprehensive National Library and Information Services Program by all levels of government, and enactment by the Federal Government of a National Library and Information Services Act. The proposed Federal legislation would have substantially expanded the types and funding level of Federal aid to libraries; similar legislation was introduced in the 96th and 97th Congresses, but no action was taken on it. 16/

After the 1979 Conference, a White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce (WHCLIST) was formed as a continuing, independent organization to track and promote implementation of the Conference's recommendations. Although the major Federal legislation proposed by the Conference has not been adopted, the WHCLIST reports that many of the individual resolutions of the Conference have been implemented by the Federal,

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16/ See the National Library Act, S. 1124, 96th Congress, introduced by Senators Javits and Kennedy, and the National Library and Information Services Act, S. 1431, 97th Congress, introduced by Senators Stafford, Kennedy, Pell, and Randolph.

State, or local governments. 17/ The WHCLIST has also proposed that another White House Conference on Library and Information Services be held by 1989; bills to this end have been introduced in the last several sessions of Congress, and have been acted upon in the 100th Congress. On June 8, 1987, the House of Representatives passed H.J. Res. 90 (H. Rept. 100-121), a bill to authorize a second White House Conference, while the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources has held hearings on a similar bill, S.J. Res. 26. A difference between H.J. Res. 90 and S.J. Res. 26 is that the former bill would authorize holding the conference sometime between September 1, 1989 and September 30, 1991, while the latter bill would require that the conference be held before December 31, 1989. Both bills would authorize "such sums as may be necessary" to be appropriated for the conference; the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that implementation of the House bill would require $6 million in budget authority. Provisions for the second conference--including the roles of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and an advisory committee--under both bills would be similar to those for the 1979 Conference. A preliminary design group for the second White House Conference, operating under the auspices of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, has proposed that the conference focus on 3 themes: the role of library and information services in promoting economic productivity, promotion of literacy, and "democratic" access to information. 18/

17/ See, for example, White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce Five-Year Review of Progress Toward Implementation of the Resolutions Adopted at the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Services, January 1985.

18/ Toward the 1989 White House Conference on Library and Information Services, Report to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science from the White House Conference Preliminary Design Group, December 3, 1985.

Issues: The primary issue with respect to past or proposed future White House Conferences on Library and Information Services is whether they have any significant impact. As noted earlier, the 1979 Conference developed a proposal for comprehensive expansion of Federal support of libraries; but no congressional action was taken on such legislation. Further, since the first Conference, the Federal program of aid for elementary and secondary school libraries has been consolidated into a block grant (see above), and the Administration has requested that no funds be appropriated for any of the Federal programs of aid to public or college libraries. Other Federal policies adopted since 1979--in the areas of access to Federal information and publications, the professional status of Federal librarians, telecommunications and postal rates, or United States participation in the United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (UNESCO)--have been contrary to resolutions adopted by the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Services.

Advocates of proposals for a second White House Conference on Library and Information Services have argued that the 1979 Conference had a significant impact, albeit not as substantial or comprehensive an effect as the conferees might have desired. Federal funding for LSCA and HEA programs has been continued, and at generally increased appropriations levels, except for title II, part A of the HEA, previously a program of relatively small, general-purpose grants for which virtually every college library was eligible. 19/ Further, many of the individual recommendations of the 1979 White House Conference have been at least partially implemented by various States, by the activities of private organizations such as the American Library Association,

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19/ Under the Higher Education Amendments of 1986 (P.L. 99-498), part A of HEA title II was amended to restrict eligibility to institutions meeting certain standards of need. See the section of this report on HEA II-A, above.

or by the Federal Government in the 1984 amendments to the LSCA (P.L. 98-480), the 1986 amendments to the HEA (P.L. 99-498), or other legislation. Advocates of a second conference might argue that the conference would give the library profession and its concerns national visibility and attention; that the conference could address the many technological developments that will have occurred since 1979; and that the recommendations of a second conference might be more widely adopted in a political and budgetary climate that could be different from that of the early 1980s.

IV. ASSISTANCE TO LIBRARIES PROVIDED BY THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND OTHER FEDERAL LIBRARIES

Although the primary function of the Library of Congress is to serve as a reference and policy analysis resource for the Congress, the Library also performs a variety of functions that directly or indirectly assist public and school/college libraries throughout the Nation. This section of the report provides a brief listing of some of these services.

Among the direct services provided to libraries throughout the Nation by the Library of Congress are:

--preparation and distribution of cataloging information, in both machine-readable form (including electronic bibliographic information networks) and in the form of printed catalog cards for use by libraries;

--preparation and dissemination of braille books, audio tapes and disks plus players for these, and other materials for the blind and physically handicapped;

--preparation and distribution of bibliographies on selected topics;

--preparation and distribution of technical publications to assist libraries in their processing activities;

--development of national and international standards for the distribution of bibliographic information;

--lending of books to other libraries through interlibrary loan networks;

--distribution of surplus books to other libraries through the gift and exchange service; and

--distribution of cataloging information on all materials registered by the Library's Copyright Office.

In addition, the Library of Congress indirectly assists public and school/college libraries by providing such services as:

--research and development related to book preservation and deacidification; 20/

--research and development of new forms of information storage, retrieval, and communications, such as a pilot program on possible uses of optical laser disks for information management and preservation;

--the documentation and dissemination activities of specialized Library organizations such as the American Folklife Center, the Music Division, the Geography and Map Division, the Law Library, the Children's Literature Center, the Prints and Photographs Division, the Rare Book and Special Collections Division, the Manuscript Division, the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, or the collections specializing in specific languages and regions of the world;

--the protection of rights to literary and artistic works provided by the Copyright Office; and

--the preparation and distribution of analyses of the current and future status and role of literacy and printed literature by the Center for the Book.

Finally, the Library of Congress acts as a general reference library itself, providing reference and related services to members of the public in its Washington, D.C. area facilities. The FY 1986 appropriation for the Library of Congress, excluding the Congressional Research Service, was $183 million.

Although other Federal libraries generally serve the information needs of the Federal agencies in which they are located, several of them also provide significant services, primarily through interlibrary loan or computerized information transfer systems, to patrons of libraries at large. The Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC), located in the Library of Congress, tracks and attempts to coordinate the activities of all Federal

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20/ Hence, removal of certain acidic substances from the paper used in older books. These acids, that were used in production of the paper, are a primary cause of deterioration of older books.

libraries and related organizations. Examples of the largest and most significant of such Federal libraries include the National Library of Medicine (NLM) of the National Institutes of Health, and the National Agricultural Library (NAL) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The NLM provides numerous services to other libraries and directly to users via interlibrary loans but especially through computerized databases. The primary NLM databases are MEDLARS, MEDLINE, TOXLINE, CHEMLINE, and the Toxicology Data Bank (TDB). These databases are made available primarily through commercial firms offering access via telephone lines to microcomputer users. The National Agricultural Library answers numerous reference requests and provides the AGRICOLA computerized database. The FY 1986 appropriation for the National Library of Medicine was $55.3 million, while that for the National Agricultural Library was $10.8 million.

In addition, at least two Federal agencies provide extensive services primarily to other Federal agencies and to individuals, but also to libraries, throughout the Nation. These are the National Archives and Records Administration and the National Technical Information Service. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) primarily stores and manages documentary records for the entire Federal Government. However, the NARA assists many individuals and libraries locate and retrieve information from those documents that is of personal or national historical interest. The NARA also operates the series of Presidential libraries, which serve as reference sources on the period of the relevant Presidential Administration; while its National Historical Publications and Records Commission provides technical assistance to archival programs in State and local governments and libraries nationwide. The National Technical Information Service (NTIS), an agency of the Department of Commerce, is intended to be a central source for the

collection and sale of domestic and foreign reports and publications on research in the areas of science, engineering, and related fields. The NTIS generally charges a fee for this service.

Finally, through the Federal Depository Library system, copies of most Federal publications (e.g., the Congressional Record, Federal Register, public laws, congressional committee reports, etc.) are distributed free of charge to approximately 1,400 public and college libraries throughout the Nation. The Depository Library system was initiated in 1859, and includes at least two libraries in each congressional district, the libraries of all Land-Grant colleges, all State libraries, and law school libraries. Two depository libraries are designated in each congressional district by the Member of Congress representing the district, and two are designated in each State by each Senator. This program is administered by the Government Printing Office; the estimated FY 1987 funding level for distribution of documents to depository libraries is $19.4 million.

V. OTHER FEDERAL ACTIVITIES THAT SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT LIBRARIES

In addition to the various forms of assistance outlined above, Federal policies in a number of other areas may significantly affect libraries and librarians. It is beyond the scope of this report to provide any substantial discussion or comprehensive listing of these policies or issues related to them; rather, for reference purposes, some of these topics are simply listed below. For further information on any of these subjects, congressional staff should contact the Congressional Research Service inquiry section or the division indicated below that is at least partially responsible for that topic.

1. Access to, and costs of obtaining, Federal publications or information, including use of the private sector for these purposes under the guidelines of Office of Management and Budget circular A-130, "Management of Federal Information Resources" (Government, Science Policy, and American Law Divisions)

2. Status of the librarian profession in the Federal Government, and contracting out of library services in Federal agencies under the guidelines of Office of Management and Budget circular A-76, "Performance of Commercial Activities" (Government Division)

3. Postal rates for books and other library materials, including subsidies therefor (Economics and American Law Divisions)

4. Telecommunications rates, especially with respect to computerized transfer of information over telephone lines (Economics Division)

5. Copyright policies (American Law Division)

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF FUNDING INFORMATION FOR LIBRARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The table below shows the FY 1987 appropriation, the FY 1988 authorization, and the FY 1988 Administration budget request for library assistance programs of the Library Services and Construction Act, Higher Education Act, Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

Summary Funding Information for Selected
Federal Library Assistance Programs
(dollar amounts in thousands)

Program	FY 1987 Appropriation	FY 1988 Authorization	FY 1988 Budget Request
Library Services and Construction Act a/			
Title I, library services	$80,000	$90,000	$0
Title II, construction	22,500	50,000	0
Title III, interlibrary cooperation	18,000	35,000	0
Title V, foreign language materials	0	1,000	0
Title VI, library literacy programs	5,000	5,000	0

Footnotes at end of table.

Program	FY 1987 Appropriation	FY 1988 Authorization	FY 1988 Budget Request
Higher Education Act, Title II			
Part A, college library resources	0	ss b/	0
Part B, library training and demonstrations	1,000	ss	0
Part C, research libraries	6,000	ss	0
Part D, college library technology and cooperation grants	0	ss	0
Education Consolidation and Improvement Act			
Chapter 2, State block grants c/	500,000	na d/	
National Commission on Libraries and Information Science	660	750	791

a/ Amounts set-aside for grants to serve American Indians and Native Hawaiians, under title IV of the LSCA, are included in the totals for LSCA titles I through III in the table.

b/ ss = "such sums as may be necessary."

c/ As noted in the body of this report, only a portion of these funds is used for library resources and related purposes, with that portion being determined at the discretion of local and State education agencies.

d/ Currently, chapter 2 is authorized only through FY 1987. The program may be automatically extended for at least one fiscal year, at the same level as the FY 1987 authorization, "such sums as may be necessary."